UNITED
NATIONS

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Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/1997/226
17 March 1997
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

LETTER DATED 17 MARCH 1997 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE NETHERLANDS TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to bring to your attention the declaration by the Presidency of the European Union on Albania, issued on 17 March 1997 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a Security Council document.

(Signed) N. H. BIEGMAN
Permanent Representative of the Netherlands
to the United Nations

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ANNEX

[Original: English and French]

Brussels, 17 March 1997

Declaration by the Presidency of the European Union on Albania, issued on 17 March 1997

Ministers discussed at Apeldoorn on 15 and 16 March the grave situation in Albania. Welcoming the initiatives of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), they heard a report on the mission to the area on 14 March led by Mr. Vranitzky, personal envoy of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, with European Union participation. They noted the request of the new Albanian Government to the European Union for external assistance.

In their discussion, Ministers took note of the following elements:

(a) The European Union is strongly committed to helping Albania to restore civilian structures and law and order;

(b) The need for the Albanians to accept responsibility for rebuilding their country and society and thus to enable the European Union to help them;

(c) The Commission is ready to provide immediate humanitarian assistance as soon as conditions are sufficiently secure to assure its delivery;

(d) The Union which has already provided substantial economic and financial assistance to Albania, is ready to resume such assistance in collaboration with the international financial institutions once sufficient stability is restored;

(e) External assistance is needed immediately for the restoration of security in particular in and around Tirana. Among the Member States there was readiness to send an advisory mission in the civilian as well as police and military fields. In this context consideration will be given to the needs of the mission for protection and communication;

(f) Consultations should take place in New York on the need for a United Nations Security Council resolution;

(g) Further steps will be coordinated with OSCE as well as the Council of Europe.

The Presidency will send, as a matter of urgency, a high-level mission to Tirana comprising also representatives of OSCE, the Commission and Albania's European Union neighbours, Greece and Italy. Its aim is to discuss with the Albanian Government ways in which the European Union can best help to achieve the above elements and to make recommendations to the Presidency. The mission will also examine the protection need of the advisory mission.